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African American-Owned Firm, On Wheels, Inc. Received National Minority Business Award

***Detroit-based African American Businessman Honored by MBDA at its
24th National Minority Enterprise Development Week
Awards Gala in Washington, DC***

WASHINGTON—The Minority Business Development Agency's National Director Ronald N. Langston recognized Randi Payton, an African American entrepreneur and founder of the Detroit-based firm, On Wheels, Inc. as the National Minority Media Cornerstone award winner during the 24th National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week conference in Washington, D.C.

"The MBDA Minority Media of the Year award honors minority media entrepreneurs whose ingenuity, hard work and perseverance have created and sustained successful, growing business ventures," said National MBDA Director Ronald N. Langston. "Mr. Payton along with the remaining MBDA national winners truly exemplifies what it means to be a successful entrepreneur who has created wealth and jobs for building and sustaining economy and the community."

"The Minority Business Development Agency's Media Cornerstone Award is the highest honor bestowed upon a minority business," said Mr. Payton. "Recognition of our entrepreneurial efforts during MED Week allows minority businesses, like On Wheels, Inc. to continue its commitment to the community and gives us renewed energy to overcome the obstacles in order to serve the ethnic minority community."

An innovator, Mr. Payton founded On Wheels, Inc. as the nation's first multi-media automotive communications company to inform African American, Latino and Asian consumers on automotive purchases and to educate the auto industry about minority auto buyers. Soon after, he established the Urban Wheel Awards becoming the automotive industry's most significant diversity event. Celebrating the growing diversity in the automotive industry, the awards recognize individuals who have fostered its growth.

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Fulfilling his commitment to families and youth, in 1995 he established the Edward David Education Foundation, named after the first African American to receive a new car franchise in the U.S. The Foundation has granted more than \$200,000 in scholarships and has trained more than 60 young people in the field of automotive communications and introduced hundreds of minority media to advertising, sponsorships and coverage of the automotive industry.

Payton was one of 9 MBDA national minority business of the year award winners recognized at this year's 24th Annual National MED Week Awards Gala held on September 1st at the Omni Shoreham Hotel in Washington, DC. Actor/producer Tim Reid, best known in "*WKRP in Cincinnati*" and his actress wife, Daphne, best known as "Vivian" in the hit show "Fresh Prince of Bel-Air" with Will Smith emceed the event. Award winners, their guests and over 1000 conference attendees also enjoyed musical selections by the Morgan State University Choir and the Pan American Symphony Orchestra.

MED Week, established by Presidential Proclamation each year since 1983, recognizes the role that minority entrepreneurs play in building the American economy through the creation of jobs, products and services, in addition to supporting their local communities. The National MED Week Conference is MBDA's signature event for the minority business enterprise community including the private, non-profit and government sectors. The conference promotes and celebrates the vital role minority businesses play in generating wealth, creating jobs and strengthening our nation's economy. It also serves as a forum to discuss the issues, trends and strategies affecting minority-owned business enterprises. This year's theme, *Minority Business Enterprises: Mastering the Supply Chain*, emphasizes how new market realities require minority businesses to strategically position their businesses in domestic and global supply chains.

Conference speakers include U.S. Commerce Secretary Carlos M. Gutierrez, U.S. Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, SBA Administrator Steven Preston, GSA Administrator Lurita Doan, and Dr. Matthew Slaughter of the President's Council of Economic Advisors. Premium sponsors of the 2006 Conference include BAE Systems, IBM, Chevron, Northrop Grumman, Raytheon company, VISA, FedEx and GVCwinstar. With over 1,000 attendees, the National MED Week features a White House breakfast series, networking events, industry-driven workshops, State of Commerce luncheon, business expo, and an awards gala.

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About the Minority Business Development Agency, US Department of Commerce

Founded in 1971 and headquartered in Washington, DC, the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. MBDA is the only federal agency created specifically to foster the establishment and growth of minority-owned businesses in this Nation. The Agency actively promotes the growth and competitiveness of large, medium and small minority business enterprises by offering management and technical assistance through a network of forty local business centers throughout the United States. Statistics on minority businesses and resources to build and sustain minority businesses are available at www.mbda.gov.